Harnessing American Ingenuity

News Release

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

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A HUGE LEAP FORWARD FOR ROBOTICS R&D

$2 Million Cash Prize Awarded to Stanford's "Stanley" as Five Autonomous Ground Vehicles Complete DARPA Grand Challenge Course

Primm, Nevada -- The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) today announced that five autonomous ground vehicles successfully completed the DARPA *Grand Challenge*, a tough, 131.6-mile course in the Mojave Desert. The results prove conclusively that autonomous ground vehicles can travel long distances over difficult terrain at militarily relevant rates of speed.

The vehicle that completed the course in the shortest amount of time was "Stanley," entered by Stanford University. The team wins the $2 million prize because it finished the entire course in the shortest elapsed time under 10 hours – six hours, 53 minutes and 58 seconds (6:53:58).

Two vehicles entered by Carnegie-Mellon University, Red Team's "Sandstorm" (7:04:50) and Red Team Too's "H1ghlander" (7:14:00) finished close behind. The Gray Team's "KAT-5" finished at 7:30:16. Oshkosh Truck's 16-ton robot, TerraMax, also finished the course, on Sunday. Its official elapsed time was not available at press time, but the vehicle will not be eligible for the cash prize because the time will exceed the 10-hour limit.

The first four finishers entered the history books as being the first ground vehicle robots to travel a great distance at relatively high speed within a specified time frame. Stanley's average speed over the 131.6-mile desert course was 19.1 mph. Sandstorm averaged 18.6 mph, H1ghlander 18.2 mph, and KAT-5 17.5 mph.

Twenty-three teams participated in the competition, which began at 6:40 a.m. Saturday morning, October 8, and ended the next day. "These vehicles haven't just achieved world records, they've made history," said DARPA Director Dr. Tony Tether. Pointing out that DARPA's mission is to accelerate the development of promising technologies, and then turn them over to others for the development of viable applications, Tether continued, "We have completed our mission here, and look forward to watching these exciting technologies take off."

(more)

DARPA *Grand Challenge* Program Manager Ron Kurjanowicz added, "The *Grand Challenge* stimulated the creation of a new community of innovators – inventors, mechanics, computer scientists, engineers, and students – who typically have not been involved in Defense-related activities. The camaraderie and competitiveness that have been the hallmark of the *Grand Challenge* since its inception demonstrates that America's heritage of ingenuity and resourcefulness is strong."

The 23 finalists were among 195 teams from 36 states and four foreign countries that filed applications to compete in DARPA's *Grand Challenge*. Over the past several months, these teams advanced to the final event by completing a series of rigorous tests designed to assess their capability of completing the desert course.

More information about the DARPA *Grand Challenge* is available at the event website, *www.grandchallenge.org*.

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DARPA is the central research and development organization for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). The agency manages research and development projects for the DoD and pursues research in technology areas where the risk can be very high, but success provides dramatic capability advances for the DoD.